

America and of Americans and of our families. It is a story of the struggle for freedom, the struggle for democracy, and the struggle for a better life for our families, our friends, and our neighbors.

As we gather in this great Chamber, this cradle of democracy here in these United States, we should never forget the lessons of Greeks and the lessons of Greek independence.

#### CELEBRATING 180 YEARS OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on March 25, as has been mentioned, Greece celebrates its 180th year of independence. I am here tonight to praise the society that represents, in a historical sense, the origins of what we call Western culture and, in a contemporary sense, one of the staunchest defenders of Western society and values. There are many of us in Congress, on both sides of the spectrum, who are staunchly committed to strengthening and preserving the ties between the Greek and American people. I would particularly like to thank the co-chairs of our Hellenic Caucus, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), for their fine leadership and tireless efforts to strengthen the ties between our two countries.

Just 200 years ago, after the Greek people began the revolution that would lead to their freedom, one of our predecessors in this Chamber, Congressman Daniel Webster, referring to the 400 years during which the Greeks were ruled by the Ottoman Empire, observed, and I quote, "These people," the Greeks, "a people of intelligence, ingenuity, refinement, spirit and enterprise, have been for centuries under the atrocious and unparalleled Tartarian barbarism that ever oppressed the human race."

The words Congressman Webster chose then to describe the Greek people, intelligence, ingenuity, refinement, spirit and enterprise, are as apt today as they ever have been. In the years since, Americans and Greeks have grown ever closer, bound by ties of strategic and military alliance, common values of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, and close personal friendship.

In the early 20th century, Greece stood by the United States in World War I when Hitler's war machine decimated Europe in the middle of this century. Greece again stood on the same side of the United States to repulse the greatest threat to freedom and human decency the world as ever seen and, I might add, at great cost to the Greek people and the Greek nation.

□ 1900

History has shown that the historic battle of Crete, in which the indomitable spirit of the Greek people forced Hitler to delay his planned invasion of Russia, was one of the most important battles of the Second World War. From the outset of that war, Greece showed its true character as a nation of courage and honor, devoted to freedom and self-determination.

World War II's aftermath left Europe mired in the Cold War; and Greece, a NATO ally to this day, once again answered the call. Greece showed its national valor and sense of historic mission, joining forces with the United States and preserving and protecting the freedoms enjoyed today by an unprecedented number of the world's people.

The qualities exhibited by the nation of Greece, Mr. Speaker, are a reflection of the strong character and values of its individual citizens. The United States has been greatly enriched as many sons and daughters of Greece made a new life in America. They and their children and grandchildren have enriched our country in countless ways, contributing to our cultural, professional, commercial, academic and political life.

The timeless values of Greek culture have endured for centuries, indeed for millennia. As Daniel Webster noted, 400 years of control by the Ottoman Empire could not overcome the Greek people's determination to be free.

But I regret to say, Mr. Speaker, to this day the Greek people must battle against oppression. For almost 24 years now, Greece has stood firm in its determination to bring freedom and independence to the illegally occupied nation of Cyprus. Like their forefathers who were under the control of a hostile foreign power for four centuries, the Cypriot people hold fast in defiance of their Turkish aggressors with every confidence that they will again be a sovereign nation, and they will.

The United States must be on their side in both the fight to secure that freedom and the celebration to mark the day when it finally arrives.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to congratulate the Greek people for 180 years of independence and thank them for their contributions to American life.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to switch subjects for a moment to talk about another matter during this month of women's history. As the Republican chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, I would like to take

the opportunity to discuss an issue that affects thousands of women each year, violence against women.

There are two types of violence against women that need to be addressed: domestic violence and sexual assault. Scratch the surface of any of our Nation's most challenging social problems, from crime in the schools to gang violence and homelessness, and you are likely to find a root cause of domestic violence.

Law enforcement officials are reporting that domestic violence situations are among their most frequent calls. Judges find that children first seen in their courts as victims of domestic violence return later as adult criminal defendants. Schools are noticing that children with emotional problems often come from an environment where violence is the norm.

Violence begets violence, and we must break the cycle. We have begun to address the problem, but there is still much work to be done. Reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act in the 106th Congress was a giant step in the right direction.

Since it passed in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been effective. In fact, the Justice Department estimates that violence against women has decreased by 21 percent since the law was originally passed. The law also has been credited with providing shelter space for more than 300,000 women and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my many colleagues here in the House who supported and fought for this important legislation, both in 1994 and the reauthorization last year. I am proud that reauthorization received such strong bipartisan support, and I am hopeful that our future efforts to address this tremendous problem will receive similar levels of support from both sides of the aisle.

The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act brought much-needed attention to these issues, attention that will be translated into greater public awareness of this issue and a greater public commitment to solving the problems of violence against women.

But another particular area of violence against women that needs more congressional attention is sexual assault. The statistics on this issue are staggering. A rape occurs every 90 seconds, and estimates show that one out of every three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime.

Seven out of every 10 rapes are committed by someone the victim knows. Seventy-six percent of the women over 18 who are raped and/or physically assaulted are assaulted by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner or date.

What can we do to address this horrendous problem? We must talk about it. We must raise public awareness. For